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## VI.—Mr. Shuckard on his falsely alleged participation in Mr. Swainson's views of Natural Arrangement: To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History

W. E. Shuckard

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stand as a distinct genus, being quite different from *Cymindis*. (N.B. Temminck's Pl. Col. 87. can hardly be the *F. nitidus* of Latham, whose expression "legs long," agrees better with the *F. hemidactylus*, Tem. Pl. Col. 3.)

The genus *Astur* was founded by Lacepède in 1799, and is therefore clearly prior to *Dadalion*, Sav.

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VI.—MR. SHUCKARD on his *falsely alleged participation in Mr. Swainson's views of Natural Arrangement*.

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,

I APPEAL to you to do me justice against the impression that may be made by what professes to be an "Analytical notice of the 129th volume of Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia, entitled, 'On the History and Natural Arrangement of Insects,' by *William Swainson*, F.R.S., &c., and *W. E. Shuckard*, Libr. R.S., &c., published in the 3rd Number of 'The Entomologist,' written by Mr. Newman."

In an advertisement prefixed to this volume of Lardner, dated from my residence, and of course emanating from me, I said, "Those paragraphs in this volume with the initials '*W. E. Sh.*' are written by Mr. Shuckard, and where several of these follow each other they are affixed to the last only; but the system of classification is exclusively Mr. Swainson's." Now, notwithstanding this, which it will be seen below that the 'Analyst' was aware of, he says in the first page of his notice\*, "I will now endeavour to show the views entertained by *Messrs. Swainson and Shuckard* on the subject:" thus clearly identifying me with the whole scheme, for following this is given the dry systematic frame of the work. He then says, "A glance at this arrangement will convince the reader that no charge of plagiarism can possibly be brought against its *authors*:" thus confirming my identification with the system: and a line or two beneath this he again says, "If the views of *Messrs. Swainson and Shuckard* display the slightest approach to nature, then are those of Mr. Macleay the most distorted, wild and unnatural: there is no point of similarity between the systems, except the frequent recurrence of the number Five. The bold alteration made by the *authors* in separating the Diptera from winged insects, is the most striking feature in the new arrangement; it proves *them* to be profound and original thinkers, and not only this, it displays an indifference to the

\* The Entomologist, No. III. p. 38.

"opinions of others, which must be the result of the *mens conscia recta*."

Would you think it possible, gentlemen, that this repetition of my assumed identity with the system of Mr. Swainson could be made in the face of this Latin phrase, and of the prefixed advertisement? and you will scarcely believe me when I tell you that their writer, at the end of the article, says, very coolly, at the bottom of this same page\*, "I have been led from its title to assign the merits of this volume conjointly to Messrs. Swainson and Shuckard, and have been treating them like the Siamese twins, as inseparable in fame; but *fairness compels me* to add that *the system of classification is entirely Mr. Swainson's*. Mr. Shuckard has most ingenuously disavowed any share in this, the great feature of the work, and I am compelled to place the chaplet of laurel on the brows of Mr. Swainson alone,—*palnam qui meruit ferat!*"

One would have supposed, if "fairness" was to have any influence in the matter, that the writer being fully aware, as he here shows himself to have been, that I had no participation whatever in Mr. Swainson's system of classification, it would have "compelled" him to abstain from carrying on through the whole of his article these imputations, which he with such amusing naïveté confesses he all the while knew to be unfounded: and is it not rather surprising that, having been driven thus to strangle these his unfortunate offspring from despair of being able to maintain them, he should not at once have quietly buried them out of the way, rather than leave their remains exposed to testify against their parent and their executioner? It would be superfluous for me to make any remark; his own statement is sufficient to give your readers an idea of the *fairness* to be expected in such 'analytical notices.'

No man has a right to complain of *his own* scientific views being *fairly* discussed, but every man has a right to repulse the attribution of views which he does not hold. My own ideas of 'system' must be known to many entomologists; for what I formerly said in my 'Essay on the Fossorial Hymenoptera†,' and subsequently repeated in this journal as

\* The Entomologist, p. 40.

† Page 11. I conceive that when all the created species are fully ascertained, the true system will be found to be neither circular, square, nor oval, neither dichotomous, quinary, nor septenary, but a uniform meshwork of organization, spread like a net over the universe. But what gaps remain to be filled! We are truly as yet scarcely upon the threshold of the great temple, and consequently still remote from the adytum where the veiled statue reposes. We have not yet learnt our alphabet, for species are the letters whereby the book of Nature must be read. London, 1835.

lately as July last\*, ought to secure me from the suspicion of being wedded to any of these dictatorial systems, which conveniently contrive that where gaps occur in their hypotheses the creatures are yet to be found that must fill them, and where inconvenient redundancies exist in Nature, these are made to merge in groups to which they have no ostensible affinity. To such systems may be applied the judicious observations of the reviewer of Gœthe's 'Theory of Colours †: ' they "intentionally obscure what they cannot illustrate, and affect to be profound when they are only disguising their ignorance." I have not even faith in the Septenary system ‡, although that is illuminated by the *seven* golden candlesticks § of Solomon's temple ||, and has found in the *sabbath* an *hebdomadal* repose from the labours of such crude concoctions ¶, but of which Burmeister said, "what is good in it is not new, and what is new is not good," and this has since been repeated here by a very courteous friend\*\* of the author of the system. Trusting that this appeal to your candour and sense of justice will not be in vain, I subscribe myself, gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

W. E. SHUCKARD.

31 Robert Street, Chelsea, Feb. 4, 1841.

\* At the conclusion of the 'Monograph of the Dorylidæ,' where I said, "The object I have pursued in studying Natural History has been to ascertain facts, or in their absence the closest possible approximation to them; for I am sure, to use the words of our great bard,

'Nature is made better by no mean,  
But Nature makes that mean.'

And she is too protean in her disguises to be fitted by any boddice we may choose to invest her with."

† Edin. Review, Oct. 1840, p. 141.

‡ *Sphinx vespiformis*, by Edward Newman. London. 8vo. 1832.

§ Were I disposed to cavil at such a display as the adduction of these numbers, made evidently in good earnest, and not sportively, for really it would have been too profane to have cited Scripture in jest, I might object to the incorrectness of the Septenary's attribution of *seven* candlesticks to Solomon's temple; for they consisted of *ten*, five being placed on the right side and five on the left of the oracle (an argument in favour of the quinquarians!), and Moses's single candlestick had but six branches, although, it is true, seven lamps were suspended from it; but *seven candlesticks* occur only in the vision of St. John at Patmos, which shows what a fantastical affair a system founded upon these seven candlesticks must be. I trust that when the '*Septenary*' dreams again, *his* revelation will be more pertinent than it is in the present instance.

|| *Sphinx vespiformis*, by Edward Newman. London. 8vo. 1832. Page 15.

¶ Wiegmann's Archiv. vol. i. No. 4.

\*\* Westwood's Introduction to the Classification of Insects, vol. i. p. 20.